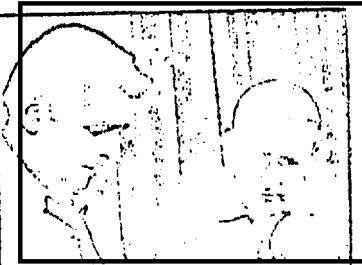


Hardboiled eyes

On the back cover of Dave J. Garrity's *Dragon Hunt* (Signet, 60¢) is a picture of two hard-boiled types. You can tell they're really tough by the way they're squinting and the way their shirts are unbuttoned at the collar and their ties pulled loose. The one on the left is Garrity, and he's maybe even a little tougher than the one on the right because his shirt is one of those gangster-stripe jobs and he has a cigarette in his mouth, showing how he isn't even afraid of the Big C. The one on the right is Mickey Spillane—The Mick, as he's known in some circles, including mine—and he's there to introduce Garrity and to say that *Dragon Hunt*, the first adventure of private eye Peter Braid, is a real guts thriller—"the kind of stuff I like to read," says The Mick. Also the kind of stuff The Mick likes to write—with an abundance of broads, booze and brutality—and son of a gun if Peter Braid and Mike Hammer aren't drinking buddies in the stories just as their creators are squinting buddies in real life.

This tough stuff began in the 1920s and 30s when pulp magazines were all the rage (to be undone by comic books and paperbacks after World War II). In *The Hardboiled Dicks* (Pocket Books, 50¢), editor Ron Goulart has gathered together eight examples of the primordial eye from the magazines *Black Mask*, *Dime Detective*, and *Detective Fiction Weekly* and has written an introductory celebration of the genre. Although Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler wrote their first stories for John T. Shaw when he was editor of *Black Mask*, there are no reminiscent examples of their work. As Goulart explains, they've never been forgotten



Garrity and Spillane

(In fact, Hammett's *The Continental Op* has just been published in a 60¢ Dell edition and Chandler's *The Big Sleep* revived in a 50¢ Pocket Books edition.) Erle Stanley Gardner has never been forgotten either, but Perry Mason was never like Lester Leith, hero of Gardner's "Bird in Hand," the last story in Goulart's collection.

Among moderns, there's probably none so hard-boiled as Donald Hamilton's Matt Helm, a secret agent who in one unforgettable episode sat coolly by

as his ex-wife was raped. After all, Helm figured, she was no blushing virgin, so it wouldn't kill her. In his 11th adventure, *The Menacers* (Gold Medal, 50¢), Helm breaks up a plot involving flying saucers and United States-Mexican relations. Inspired perhaps by the Dean Martinized movie versions of *The Silencers* and *The Ambushers*, Hamilton has made the new story somewhat more bizarre than usual, but Helm is his same cynical, ruthless self.

John D. MacDonald, author of *The Last One Left* (Crest, 75¢), the story of a mass murder at sea and a booty of \$800,000, acknowledges a certain

debt to Hammett and Chandler, but in many of his 53 suspense novels he surpasses them.

Had Allen Dulles not chosen to practice the craft of espionage, as an OSS agent and later as director of the CIA, he might have lacked ideas for his stories but not the skill in telling them. *The Secret Surrender* (Popular Library, 60¢), his account of a World War II Operation Sunrise designed to collapse Hitler's power, would be an intriguing tale of mystery and suspense even if it didn't happen to be true.

The plotters in Wilfrid Sheed's comic novel, *Office Politics* (Pocket Books, 95¢), are of the soft-boiled kind. The suspense, revolving about the question of who will triumph in the grapple for power over a little literary magazine called *The Outsider*, is virtually lost in Sheed's delightfully horrifying portrayal of the cruelties, self-deceptions and futility that characterize games people play in the office.

—CLARENCE PETERSEN